TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

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Spiritual Fruits *from a* Garden

JOHN HALKO

This Publication

BECAUSE of wartime printing conditions, it has been found necessary to issue TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH as a bulletin without regular monthly frequency. We expect, however, to be able to make available a series of informal papers, and to print nine of these issues in the course of twelve months, as we had planned and promised. The Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council of Churches asks you to be patient if copies do not arrive regularly.

Brief stories of what people are doing in local congregations and communities will be the chief features. The aim is to help put the worker in the small community into touch with numerous activities.

Part of Larger Program

The paper will be an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program," that will encourage a national "rural church movement." The paper will be closely linked with a regularly held National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country.

This Issue
No. 6
Published March, 1944

• Bollinger was hard-boiled. He was sure of himself. He could drive his way through a tough world to his own satisfaction. He did not feel the need of the help of others. To him, foreigners were an opportunity to gain power in politics; he despised Negroes; God—he laughed at the mention of God. He naturally had no use for the church.

But—self-sufficient Mr. Bollinger, like multitudes of his fellow-citizens, was caught up in the maelstrom of the depression. Like more than 700 other heads of families, he came to the Christian Center and asked for a garden, and for seeds and plants to put into that garden. He was granted a garden, he was given seeds and plants. In due time, he set out to plant them. However, Bollinger had never gardened, and he knew nothing about gardening.

A Neighbor Helped

In the garden next to his, a man was busily and efficiently preparing the soil to plant. It was quite evident that he knew what he was about. So, Bollinger called over, and asked for some advice and direction. The man slowly lifted himself, came nearer, and said, "Sho' enuf, white man, doan you know 'bout gardenin'?" Bollinger admitted reluctantly, he did not. The big man set to helping him plant his garden.

As the days passed, Bollinger's interest in his garden increased. He frequently consulted his neighbor. His garden grew apace. When fall came, he proudly displayed his best products on the tables at the Harvest Festival.

Harvest Festival opened with a worship and praise service, followed by testimonies. Bollinger got to his feet and asked for a word.

The Testimony

Said he, "Friends! As most of you know, I had no love for God nor man and thought highly of myself. But I have had an experience this year I want to share with all of you." Bollinger turned and looked around the people gathered for the Harvest Festival. Not seeing whom he was seeking, he called, "Is Mr. Bradford in here?" A big, tall, Negro arose, and answered, "Here I is!" Said Mr. Bollinger, "I want to introduce my friend and neighbor, Mr. Bradford, to you. This friend helped me get my garden agrowing. He taught me how to garden. What I grew in my garden, grew so well because he helped me. I consider him one of my best friends. Through him I came to know God. I was on my knees, he beside me, when I saw the first little green leaf of a seed I planted push its head out of the ground. I want all of you to know that this man, Mr. Bradford, is my brother. With that wee bit of green growth, on my knees, beside Bradford, I met God."

Slogan for '44 Convocation

• The Managing Editor has been learning a good deal recently by talking with a layman, Ted H. Townsend, who is secretary of the Methodist Rural Fellowship, and, for a living, business manager of the Dairymen's League News. Ted lives at Waterville, N. Y. three out of every four weeks. At first Ted thought the M. E. was a minister, and we received a good lecture. Then when the truth came out that we both were laymen, we got down to normal conversation.

Ted urges, among other things, that the 1944 Convocation on the Church in Town and Country have this slogan: "One lay person for every minister present." He thinks this would actually happen, if the ministers who plan to attend would see to it that young people or adult lay leaders in the congregations would also attend.

What About the Farmers' Church?

Excerpts from an address before the Northern New York Conference of the Methodist Church by Ted H. Townsend.

• Times have changed for the rural church since the "horse and buggy" days. In the "good old days" the church was the center of activity, both spiritual and social. Today there is competition with meetings of the Grange, Farm Bureau, Home Bureau, Dairymen's League, bridge club, and now war activities.

Farm population has declined as power machinery has come into use. It used to take *three* farm families to produce enough food for themselves and *one* city family. Now it takes only *one farm family* to produce enough for itself and *three city families.*

Changes Affecting Church

The reason for this is better seed, better stock, more scientific farming; more and better farm equipment. The result is a decline in rural population, which has affected the rural church.

Farms used to be nearly self-supporting. Today the farmer is a "specialist," growing one or two crops, selling for cash, and buying the commodities he needs. When farm prices are low, there is a detrimental effect on the producer who doesn't have enough money to pay for his requirements.

The farmer has a new "hired man," electricity, which works twenty-four hours a day but requires cash to operate. Gasoline, for which he must also pay cash, is needed to operate his machinery.

The farmer has become a dependent. He sells his products at wholesale and buys at retail. He depends on distributors for fair returns. This is why farm cooperatives have been organized, to gain a greater part of the ultimate selling price for the farmer.

Rural pastors do not remain long enough on a charge. The State average is 2.9 years, as compared with about 5 years in cities. The pastor's work would be more efficient if he remained longer.

City-Country Cooperation

There should be closer cooperation between rural and city pastors and churches. All are working for the same goal. A way should be arranged so that the city pastor could learn of rural problems. No community can prosper unless the farmers in the area are prosperous.

We suggest a survey of certain definite rural areas to see whether rural churches could be operated more efficiently, a report on such a survey to be made to the conference, or association, or governing body.

Trends in Church Membership

• Contrary to popular impressions that the "smaller sects" show the most rapid gains, the official reports indicate that the main growth in church membership is accounted for by the 50 larger bodies with over 50,000 members, between 1926 and 1941-42, the latest figures available. The total church membership reported in the continental United States increased 25.5 per cent, the number of national religious bodies (denominations) reporting increased 20.7 per cent, and the estimated population increased 14.3 per cent. The number of local churches increased only 7.6 per cent.

The 43 Protestant bodies having over 50,000 members gained at the rate of 23.8 per cent, almost exactly the same as the Roman Catholic gain in the same period—23.3 per cent. The bodies with less than 50,000 members reported total gains of only 12.8 per cent. Some small religious bodies made spectacular gains, but more than one third of them reported decreases. These are findings of a study, published in the Federal Council's *Information Service.*

Merom

• Vol. I, No. 1, of Merom Rural Life Bulletin, Merom Institute, Merom, Indiana, has appeared. It tells about the many doings at the Institute on the Wabash, in Southern Indiana, and the various community relationships, church study groups, etc.

Resources of the Church

PAUL L. VOGT,
U. S. Department of Agriculture

• Rural churches are found in most communities, and their significant assets are spiritual. The church is universal in its interests. All humanity is its concern. The church is generally accepted by rural people as an institution of vital importance. The renaissance of the rural neighborhood is making the persistence of the church as an institution of increasing importance. The rural churches are centers for actual and potential lay leadership for community improvement. It is a tradition in the church that it is worthwhile to render some volunteer service. Volunteers from churches generally take their duties seriously.

The basic ethical philosophy of life represented by the church is a resource that puts the church in a strategic position of influence. The church is committed to the building of the Christian community. Improvements are constantly being made in the training of ministers for rural community service. The rural church has resources outside of its own life; it can draw upon the church at large.

Each local church should have one or more small groups for study of the tenant, sharecropper and farm labor situation. The local church should have a program designed to bring tenants into church and community life. The church should encourage ownership. The church should work for fair tenant-owner contracts. The rural churches should take part in the process of shaping state and national farm policies.—*Abstract of an Address Before the Columbus Convention.*

"Country Editor"

• William Allen White bought the *Emporia Gazette* in 1895, at age 22, for $3,000, which he borrowed. Shortly before he died, a bitter critic of the modern newspaper said that the editor of the *Emporia Gazette* represented altogether the best in the American editorial tradition. There was always a market at a good price for anything he wrote.

In Spring and Fall, he helped Mrs. White with the housecleaning. He received his neighbors in his shirtsleeves in an office that was always open. It was a very small office, cluttered with old proofs and everything imaginable.

Probably the most famous editorial he ever wrote dealt not with public affairs, in which he was expert, but was about his daughter Mary White, who met an untimely death while riding a horse. When William Allen White simply wrote down what happened at his daughter's funeral, he told the story of the tenderness of a whole community, including that of the favorite cop, and of the students of the high school.

William Allen White was a layman of the Congregational Christian Church; recently he had been appointed a representative of his denomination as a member of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. Once we gave him a tea at headquarters. The Women's Cooperating Commission piled up the sandwiches and cakes. But Mr. White had arrived with a little paper bag. Out of it he brought an apple that he had bought from a push cart vendor on 23rd Street. From his pocket came a pocket knife with which he neatly sliced the apple. He had his apple. The rest of us had the cakes. We also enjoyed his comments on numerous topics.

May his life inspire this generation of rural journalists! We know that Emporia is now a city, but we believe its citizens are proud that the nation knew William White as a country editor, and that he was the nation's most famous country editor.

What Have Protestants Said?

• Pronouncements by official Protestant agencies, expressing "The Social Ideas of the Churches for Agriculture and Rural Life" were compiled by Benson Y. Landis, for Bulletin 73, 1942 of the Christian Rural Fellowship, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., and copies are available at 5 cents each.

The summary is given below. A number of copies of the full statement are available from the Fellowship.

Man and the Land

"The future of democratic America is largely dependent upon the economic and social independence of the American farmer. . . . We cannot tolerate . . . any system of farm tenancy that reduces the tenant to a state of intolerable poverty and toil. Every effort should be made to secure for the farmer and his family economic and social justice, adequate social institutions. . . ." declared the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in 1937.

There have been other most important statements on the relation of man and the land. The Congregational National Council in 1925 stated that a translation of the ideals of Jesus into agriculture means, among other things, "that the farmer shall have access to the land he works, on such terms as will ensure him personal freedom and economic encouragement, while society is amply protected by efficient production and conservation of fertility." This statement was also adopted by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States in 1926.

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1928 was even more specific regarding farm ownership: "The tiller of the soil shall be encouraged in his efforts to own the land he farms. . . ." But the General Conference of the new merged Methodist Church of 1940 did not continue to say so, and the current Methodist Discipline does not carry these words. It says: "We stand for the safeguarding of the farmer and his family, and for the preservation of all the values of rural life."

Federal Council Statement

The most comprehensive interdenominational formulation of social ideals was that adopted unanimously by the quadrennial session of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America in 1932. The original social ideals of 1908 had been industrial. In the 1932 draft were frequent references to agriculture, and these influenced denominational resolutions in subsequent years. In this declaration it was said that "the churches should stand for": "Economic justice for the farmer in legislation, financing, transportation. . ."; "extension of . . . social services to the farm family"; "a living wage . . . and above this a just share for the worker in the product of industry and agriculture"; "encouragement of cooperatives . . . among farmers. . . ."

The Cooperatives and Farmers

The most frequent references to agriculture and rural life in the Protestant pronouncements are in support of economic cooperation among farmers. Some of these declarations were made before the large number on economic cooperation that followed the visit of Toyohiko Kagawa of Japan to the United States in 1935-36.

The Congregationalist National Council of 1925, the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States of 1926, and the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1928 all declared: "There shall be every encouragement to the organization of farmers for economic ends, particularly for cooperative sales and purchases."

Rural Schools Undermined as Teachers Leave

7,700 Classrooms Vacant According to U. S. Survey

BENJAMIN W. FRAZIER,

• Reports from school superintendents in every part of the country show that the education of millions of American children is suffering severely because of a shortage of teachers.

Studies by the U. S. Office of Education and the National Education Association show that there are possibly 7,700 classrooms that have no teachers. One teacher in every five left his position last year. Possibly 57,000 persons who cannot meet the regular requirements for teachers' certificates have been granted war emergency permits to serve in the schools.

The crisis in the schools has been growing since Pearl Harbor. The number of vacant classrooms at that time was about 1,000. Last year it was 7,500 and this year, an estimated 7,700.

Before Pearl Harbor about 90,000 teachers left their jobs each year. In contrast, last year perhaps 170,000 moved to non-teaching jobs, or to other teaching positions.

In 1940-41 only 2,300 war emergency certificates were issued to teachers with below-standard qualifications. In 1941-42, 4,600 were issued and in 1942-43, 38,000—an eight-fold increase over the preceding year. Tens of thousands of teenage girls just out of high school, feeble elderly persons and persons not professionally prepared to teach have been hired to keep the schools open.

Educational losses caused by a lack of qualified teachers are dangerous to the nation both in times of war and in times of peace. Nevertheless, local communities have permitted the closing of thousands of classes in which essential subjects were taught.

Most of these classes are in industrial arts, physical education, mathematics, business subjects, agriculture, physics, home economics, chemistry and trades and industries.

These subjects for the most part are important not only for peacetime workers in factories, fields and homes, but also for soldiers and workers in war industries and other war-related fields. An example is vocational agriculture, in which more than 1,500 departments of instruction are now closed because teachers cannot be found.

In thousands of rural schools poor teaching and pupil management caused by the teacher shortage are resulting in much loss of the pupils' time, poor study habits, lack of progress through the grades, bad habits of behavior and truancy. Where there are no qualified teachers the schools can do little to help parents and communities solve the problem of child delinquency.

Christian Rural Order

• Friends of the Soil, Pinehurst, N. C., in the course of an announcement of their programs as "keepers of the holy earth," make the following statement:

"Wasted lives issue from wasted soil. Today the evidences of wasted soil and wasted souls are scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The time has come when the Christian forces of this nation must give their strength and resources to the building of a more Christian rural order. We must arrest those forces destroying the people and set in motion new and constructive forces which will bring health and healing to rural America. *It is the rural church, with an intelligent and consecrated ministry devoted to the total needs of the people, that must lead out in the reconstruction of rural America.* The rural church must become the focal point from which powerful healing influences radiate into the entire countryside. For a weary and disconsolate people the church that meets their daily needs will become a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The churches of rural America will fulfill their historic Christian mission when they become the instruments under God whereby souls and soils are redeemed."

Town & Country Church

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Remit to the Home Missions Council

Board of Editors

Rural Church Officers

The following persons with responsibility for town and country church in the religious bodies and interdenominational agencies constitute the *Board of Editors:*

JAMES A. CRAIN, Department of Social Welfare and Rural Work, United Christian Missionary Society, Disciples of Christ.

MARK A. DAWBER, Executive Secretary, Home Missions Council of North America.

HENRY W. MCLAUGHLIN, Department of Country Church and Sunday School Extension, Executive Committee of Religious Education and Publication, Presbyterian Church in the U. S.

HENRY S. RANDOLPH, Unit of Rural Church Work, Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

MARK RICH, Town and Country Work, American Baptist Home Mission Society.

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M. R. ZIGLER, Brethren Service Committee, Church of the Brethren.

BENSON Y. LANDIS, Secretary, Committee on Town and Country, Home Missions Council and Federal Council of Churches, Managing Editor.

WHAT IS THE COMMITTEE ON TOWN AND COUNTRY DOING?

During the year 1943, three new and important steps were taken:

1. The Executive Committees of the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council took action constituting the Committee as officially a joint agency of both Councils. The Committee on Town and Country was established in 1912 by the Home Missions Council. In 1931 the Executive Committee of the Federal Council recognized the Committee on Town and Country "as its channel of operation in this field." Since that time the Federal Council has furnished the part-time service of the Secretary. In September, 1943, the Federal Council assigned one-half of the time of the Secretary to this interest.

THE CONVOCATION

2. The first session of a National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country was held in Columbus, Ohio, September 6-8. Four hundred and fifty persons from 41 states and Canada participated. Much of the work of the Convocation was done in twelve Commissions which considered nearly all aspects of the work of the local Church in town and country. In this Convocation special emphasis was put on the subject of the Church and Land Tenure and five of the addresses before general sessions were on this theme. We expect the Convocation on the Church in Town and Country to provide a place where the rural churchmen may meet to consider their special interests and their relationships to the church at large. The Committee has already voted to hold the second Convocation in the state of Indiana in the fall of 1944 and plans are being made to make possible a larger participation of lay leaders, both men, women and youth, than was the case in 1943.

"TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH"

3. The Committee began publication of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH. Because of wartime conditions it has been found impossible to issue this as a periodical with regular frequency. However, arrangements have been made to print informal papers in the form of eight page issues, and we expect to bring out nine of these a year, as we had planned originally with TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH as a periodical. This is the arrangement that will be carried out for the duration of the war, or so long as the present regulations with respect to the use of paper are in effect.

TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH will be primarily a methods' paper for the ministers in town and country. The general purpose is to put the ministers in the town and country church in touch with numerous activities, programs, plans, and ideas being carried out in many parts of the nation. We hope it will be sufficiently interesting so that the lay leaders will also find it useful.

A sample issue was printed in September. The October issue contained a digest of the reports of the Commissions of the Columbus Convocation and the November issue was devoted to a symposium written by town and country ministers on *How to Finance the Country Church.*

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

The Committee continues to encourage numerous educational institutions, mainly agricultural colleges and theological seminaries, to arrange for institutes, conferences, camps, courses, etc. It is estimated that at least 3,500 rural ministers have attended these various offerings. Twenty-four of these were held under the general auspices of the Committee on Town and Country, and various members of the Committee have cooperated with fifteen institutes arranged under the auspices of the Committee on Sharecropper Work, which are separately reported.

During 1944 we are asking all of these training events, which are locally administered and financed, to emphasize the church and land tenure and the training needed by the minister in town and country so that he may improve his service to the rural church and community during the post-war period. These schools are no longer held exclusively in the summer as was once the case. The tendency now is to conduct in-service training at any convenient time in the course of the year. In many states there are opportunities for fellowship with leaders of farm organizations, government officials and leaders of rural social work.

HARVEST FESTIVALS

For the second year the Committee has conducted an informal movement for the encouragement of the holding of Harvest Festivals in all churches, city and country, separately from the national Thanksgiving observance. The Committee again issued a special order of service which has had wide interdenominational use. The purpose of this movement is to recover for the modern church certain of the rich liturgical materials that have been used in the past and and have lately been neglected, especially in the town and city churches.

We are happy to report that the Secretary of Agriculture has had a special interest in Harvest Festivals and that in many areas where churches have conducted them, agricultural officials have given encouragement. Also, rural ministers have participated generously in areas where a Harvest Festival was conducted on a community basis.

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RURAL LIFE SUNDAY

Since 1929 the Committee has encouraged the wide observance of Rogation Sunday, the fifth after Easter, as Rural Life Sunday. We have published annually an order of service which is widely reprinted in the religious press and also in leaflet form by many thousands of rural and urban churches throughout the nation. In some sections rural and urban ministers exchange pulpits on this day. In many communities farm organizations attend in a body.

As an example of the interest of farm organizations, we may cite the work of the Grange in the state of Ohio. There the Master of the Grange called upon all of the 1,000 local Granges to cooperate with their local churches in the observance of Rural Life Sunday. We urge the wide observance of Rural Life Sunday on the fifth Sunday after Easter or any appropriate Sunday in the spring of the year. Observance of this day presents to the church at large the opportunity to put its mind once a year, as did the early church, on the meaning of Christianity for rural life and rural life for Christianity.

EXTENSIVE COLLABORATION

The Committee provides a means of collaboration among those interested in the rural church within the constituency of the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council. This collaboration takes many forms. We give a few illustrations:

Three of our members are at work compiling a book which may be called *Songs and Hymns of the Rural Spirit.*

Three of our members are advising the publishers of *Town and Country Pulpit* in the expectation of making this a useful interdenominational annual manual of sermon material for ministers in town and country.

Three of our members are a Committee on Land Tenure, which has had the generous assistance of staff members of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Farm Foundation. They expect in 1944 to make a comprehensive report of five years of study.

In the course of the year we have conferred informally with leaders of the Roman Catholic Rural Life Movement and with officers of the Jewish Agricultural Society.

We have worked with committees and agencies that assisted urban youth, who did farm work during the summer of 1943 and assisted in the national food production program.

We recently established a committee which is to assist in efforts being made to establish cooperation between agricultural colleges and theological seminaries, which has taken practical form during the last few years.

In cooperation with the Committee on Migrant Work and the Department of Race Relations, we have taken a special interest in the Farm Security Administration, particularly its program to bring medical care to low income farmers, its tenant purchase program, and its work for rural rehabilitation.

We have worked with the Soil Conservation Service and encouraged that agency to produce special materials on soil conservation that may be useful in town and country churches.

Relocation of Japanese Americans in rural communities has been a primary concern of a number of the rural church leaders.

The place of the Church in the life of rural Negroes has had the consideration of the Committee on Town and Country.

We are happy to report that for the first time in its history the Committee on Town and Country has had a budget during the year 1943. Contributions have been made by eight of the cooperating home mission boards.

CLIFFORD L. SAMUELSON,
Chairman

BENSON Y. LANDIS,
Secretary

The above is the text of the annual report filed with the Federal Council of Churches and the Home Missions Council for 1943 — *published in* 1944

COMMITTEE ON TOWN AND COUNTRY
297 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

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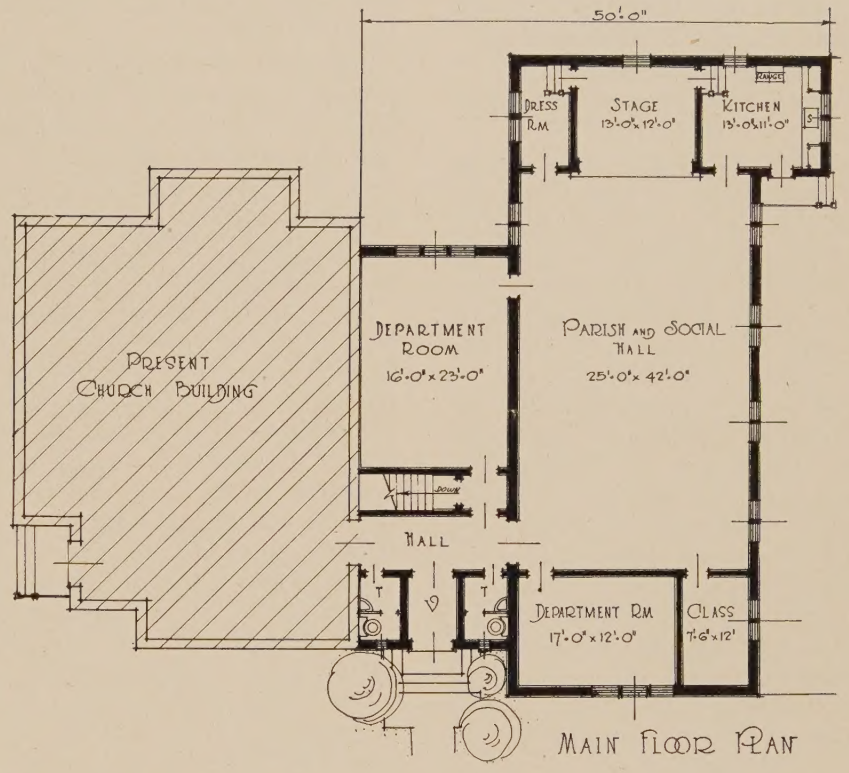
Planning to Build—Remodel?

• If so, you are invited to consult the Interdenominational Bureau of Architecture, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., Rev. E. M. Conover, Director. In this, and succeeding numbers, we are presenting illustrations of plans. Below is a plan for erecting additions to a rather common type of building.



MAIN FLOOR PLAN

Status of Merger Plan

• The Executive Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America at its bi-monthly meeting on January 18, approved and sent to its constituent bodies for study and action the proposed constitution for a National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

The proposed Council would embrace eight interdenominational agencies—the Council of Church Boards of Education, the Federal Council of Churches, the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, the Home Missions Council of North America, the International Council of Religious Education, the Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, the United Council of Church Women, and the United Stewardship Council.

Prepared by a committee representing the eight agencies, the plan had already been approved by the executive bodies of the Home Missions Council and the United Stewardship Council for transmission to their respective constituent boards, but no final action has yet been taken by any of the participating organizations.

North Dakota Law Helps Family Type Farmer

• A recent issue of *The Christian Science Monitor* quotes James G. Patton, president of the National Farmers' Union, on the effects of the ten-year-old North Dakota law, forbidding corporations to own agricultural lands. Patton says the law was passed in 1933, giving corporations ten years of grace to get out of farming. The North Dakota courts have upheld the Act.

Mr. Patton says that corporations are disposing of their land as rapidly as possible, and that the ten-year grace period has already expired. He sees the land returning to the individual holder, the head of a family.

Extension Service Emphasizes Neighborhoods

In *Rural Sociology* for December, 1943, a quarterly published at the North Carolina State College, Raleigh, N. C., D. E. Lindstrom of the Illinois College of Agriculture reviews the war-time emphasis of the Agricultural Extension Service on rural neighborhood activities and organization. At a national conference, 95 per cent of the counties of the United States were reported to have 260,000 rural neighborhoods, with 648,100 leaders appointed or elected.

Anniversary—Lord's Acre Movement

• *Farmers' Federation News,* Asheville, N. C. for February, 1944 (5 cents a copy) contains a number of articles celebrating the 14th anniversary of the Lord's Acre Movement. There are ten special articles with reports from many states and mission fields.

Correspondent Comments

• From a note by Leslie T. Wells, Riverhead, N. Y.:

"For peace, we need a world wide soil utilization and restoration program.

"All peoples sense the need—Food for freedom from want and fear.

"The soil is quiet. The rural church is not heard in the councils of the church.

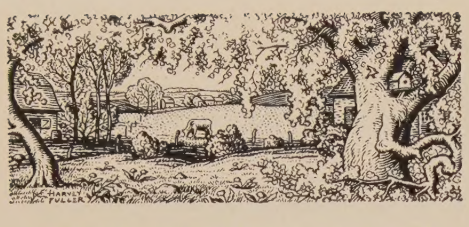
"The best voices of the rural church are lost to cities.

"Every denomination needs not only a unified organization, but one which will integrate the isolated church.

"Save the soil to save ourselves."

Midwest Rural Churches

• The Augustana Book Concern, Rock Island, Illinois publishes *A Study of the Midwest Rural Churches of the Lutheran Augustana Synod,* by A. D. Mattson. The booklet closes with a comprehensive list of conclusions and recommendations.



A Call to the Clergy of America For Mutual Understanding

DR. RALPH W. SOCKMAN
FATHER EDWARD J. WALSH, C.M.
RABBI ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN

• We are appalled at the denial of the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God that is bringing unprecedented sorrow and suffering to the world today. The persecutions and massacres perpetrated upon men in many lands because of their race or religion awaken horror and revulsion. The most sacred affirmations of religion, whether of Protestantism, Catholicism or Judaism, are discredited and derided. The sovereignty of God and the dignity and worth of men are alike repudiated.

This presents at once a call and an opportunity to church and synagogue, to render a service never more needed than today. Never more than now was there a time when all who believe in God and in the value and inalienable rights of man should affirm their faith and demonstrate their loyalty to it.

Unique Contribution

While the energies of the nation are devoted to the prosecution of the war, the churches and synagogues of America have an unique contribution to make.

It is to proclaim and to illustrate by action at home those principles of justice, amity, understanding and cooperation among men of all religious persuasions and racial origins upon which human brotherhood depends and to commend them.

Every divisive and destructive influence from within the nation or without, every vestige of prejudice that sets men apart, must be abjured and rejected. Let the churches and synagogues now lead the way without compromise or delay! Let them do their part in establishing a definite and practical program in America for cooperation and brotherhood among all Americans.

Churches at Peace Conference

• At the Columbus Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, considerable interest was expressed in the representation of churches, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish, at the forthcoming peace conference. Many others had also been concerned.

The Executive Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, after consideration of this matter, has decided that "special representation of the Protestant churches at a peace table is not an effective or appropriate way of accomplishing the ends desired."

The Commission on a Just and Durable Peace has recently given the Council's Executive Committee a statement of the reasons for taking this position. It holds that the function of the church is to serve as the conscience of the state; that any settlement will not measure up in all respects to Christian ideals; the church is not prepared to participate in the day by day decisions of government that are even now influencing the peace making process.

The Commission believes that our government in the making of the peace will take account of public opinion. The churches can function most creatively by developing a "resolute opinion on post-war problems grounded in Christian faith."

Farmers' Status

• In the February, 1944 *Atlantic*, Boston, there is an article by Sumner H. Slichter of Harvard University on "The Labor Crisis," in which the following sentence appears, in a review of war-time economic trends:

"Although farm incomes have risen faster than wages, the average farmer started from such a low level that even today he gets in a year a little more than half as much cash as the average factory employee."

Farm Wage Rates

• Wage rates for farm labor during the last quarter of 1943 were at the highest point for that period in 20 years of record; they were 275 per cent of the 1910-14 average; they were 51 points higher than a year previous.

How "Town and Country Church" Is Produced

• There have been four occasions during recent months, when the Managing Editor has sat down with advisers to receive ideas and practical suggestions about what is to go into this paper and how it is to be presented.

The Board of Editors also had one meeting in January in New York, which was set up as a sort of "clinic."

Out of these "clinics" have come the following guides for editorial procedure during 1944:

(1) All articles are to be relatively concise and short.

(2) Usually only two signed articles as long as a page each will be run each month.

(3) The issues are to have illustrations.

(4) Pamphlets and books are to be noted.

(5) Some news items will be run, but we cannot expect to run a "folksy newspaper" for 25 denominations. We must leave that to the various denominational media.

(6) Letters to the Managing Editor for publication are welcome.

(7) The emphasis is on *methods* used in various activities. Although we stress the *how*, we do not believe we can separate the *how* from the *what* and the *why* and the *when*.

(8) We are striving to have an informal and rural atmosphere in our pages.

(9) We hope every reader will feel free to submit materials.

(10) We repeat the original announcement made about editorial policy. We aim:

"A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

"B. To improve the administration of the local church, in the broadest sense, this to include the organization of the church; its program, finance, religious education, community relationships; and the training of lay leadership.

"C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace discussions of the ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message."

Book Review

he Romance of the Ministry.
By Raymond Calkins. Pilgrim Press, Boston. $2.00.

This book by one of the wisest and most beloved ministers of New England is a tonic for those who feel discouraged about the ministry or have lost their earlier enthusiasm for it. No occupation in the world seems to Dr. Calkins to afford "romance" comparable with that which is found in dealing with human lives at the deeper levels. The quiet work of pastoral counseling in even the smallest parish is described as an appeal to sympathy, imagination and friendship.

Most of the volume consists of informal counsel on the many-sided work of the minister—his preaching, his leadership in worship, his conduct of the sacraments, his pastoral contacts, his relations with children, his ministry to the sick, his personal habits and self-discipline. It would be difficult to suggest a more helpful volume on the parish ministry than this unpretentious little book.

—S.M.E.

Preaching Technique?

• 'Tis said a college president and a rural evangelist once discussed good methods of public speaking.

"I always try so to arrange and present my message that it will appeal to the probable interests of most of the audience," said the college president.

"I put my fodder on the ground, where a giraffe, a jackass, or a jackrabbit can eat it," said the rural evangelist.

Religion and the General Welfare

Broadcast by the Hon. Henry A. Wallace, Vice President of the United States, for the United Church Canvass.

• The freedom of the individual has been the great driving force of civilization for the past three hundred years. In the strength of that force men have conquered continents, felling the trees, exploiting the soil, and setting the blast furnaces roaring. Using that force they have made millions of inventions, some of them to save life and enrich it—others to destroy life. Some of these inventions annihilate space and time and draw the world together. Others tend to set class against class, region against region, race against race and man against man in a manner more intense than was known in the history of the old days.

Supreme Allegiance

As we plan for the maximum freedom of the future, one central fact stands out. Freedom, using the glorious forces of modern civilization, will destroy itself if every individual, every region, every class does not recognize with more than mere lip service a supreme allegiance to the general welfare. If this conviction is not found deep within the souls of well-informed and well-meaning men, there will be ceaseless strife within the nations and between the nations. Without allegiance to the general welfare, the strife will become periodically more and more violent until either freedom itself has been destroyed or the modern high-powered inventions have been put out of use. By the general welfare, I mean the antithesis of that which is represented by the pressure groups with their high paid lobbyists battering against the state and national legislatures to get an advantage for special privilege at the expense of everybody.

At this point religion steps in. When I say religion I use the term in its original sense to refer to the force which binds us back again to the beginning, the center and the end of our being. You can call that to which we are bound God. Or if you prefer, you can call it the general welfare or the service of the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth. In the eyes of God all nations, all races, all regions, all classes and all men are equal and are distinguished solely by their purity of heart in the service of the general welfare.

Common Cause

From this point of view there is no distinction between the Jewish, the Catholic and the Protestant religions. On this particular occasion they have made common cause because each religion sees so clearly that worldwide war is a direct result of the worldwide failure of religion to give to men a growing sense of responsibility to that larger unity which they are continually making possible with their freedom and their inventions. Class war and race war will continue long after hostilities cease unless each one of us uses his freedom more continuously and more consciously in the service of the general welfare. We must manifest this service in our daily lives each in his own way.

Government is one symbol of the general welfare. The church is another. Here in the United States we have wisely separated these two great institutions. No one is compelled by government to support a national church with his taxes. In time of war, government trebles and quadruples its taxes. The church finds its responsibility to the general welfare trebled by war, but it has no method of increasing its income except to appeal to the people themselves.

Uniting Humanity

The Catholics, the Protestants and the Jews are now appealing. The priests, the ministers and the rabbis are in the business of teaching freedom-loving men to practice the restraint and charity without which freedom cannot survive. You may not believe in any one of these religions, but if you are a thoughtful man you must recognize a supreme need for some agency to emphasize in every town and village, week after week, the bonds which hold humanity together.

Overseas Relief and Reconstruction— The Program of the Churches

• The Churches have united through the Federal Council of Churches and the Foreign Missions Conference of N.A. to set up the Church Committee on Overseas Relief and Reconstruction. Mr. Harper Sibley is Chairman.

The purpose of the Committee is to focus the interest of church people in a united Christian ministry of mercy to war victims, both now and post-war.

The Committee's utmost effort will be to help the national and local church bodies of Europe, Asia and Africa rise to early and effective functioning in their own appropriate territories. We will depend upon such bodies and upon the World Council of Churches and the National Christian Councils in Asia and Africa to inform us regarding the services they desire from this country.

On this basis we will work out a varied program that will provide a unique and distinctive Christian service to the churches and peoples in need, adapting it as may be wise to the different situations in Europe, Asia and Africa. Co-ordination will be sought between the several denominations planning to serve their "family" branches overseas. United service is to be undertaken wherever possible. Eight recommended Christian agencies are already functioning and other joint undertakings will be worked out as information of need is received. To meet these needs, each denomination will present the appeals to its own constituency and designate for desired services.

Further information about the church program can be secured by writing either to your denominational relief committee or to Leslie B. Moss, Executive Director, Church Committee on Overseas Relief and Reconstruction, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York.

10,000th Nature Story

• Recently Thornton W. Burgess published his 10,000th nature story. Thirty-two years ago he finished his 16th consecutive nature story and told his publishers there would be no more, saying: "I'm written out. I've exhausted all my ideas for nature stories."

But now, having written 10,000 stories about "Little People of the Green Forest and the Green Meadow," he plans to go on and on. The 10,000th story was about "The Million Little Sunbeams," and the last paragraph, as published in the *New York Herald Tribune* for January 29, 1944, was:

"So the million little sunbeams came down from the Great Sun to see the World. And when the Black Shadows of the night crept over the face of the Green Earth, they could not drive out the million little sunbeams. For, behold, the million little sunbeams were safely locked in the hearts of flowers and the hearts of men."

American Co-ops Go Into Production

• Cooperatives in the United States now own over 100 mills, factories, refineries, etc.; also numerous oil wells and many miles of pipe lines, according to a recent announcement by the Cooperative League of the U.S.A. 167 West 12th Street, New York 11, N. Y.

The drive into production has recently been very rapid. As cooperatives have developed there has been a demand from members that supplies be cooperatively produced. Cooperative leaders claim that the ownership of their own factories and other production units results in additional savings for consumers and also enables them to protect and control the quality of goods.

Among the production units cooperatively owned and operated are farm machinery plants, fertilizer factories, egg hatcheries, flour mills, canneries, bakeries and a cosmetics laboratory and factory.

Support of U.N.N.R.A.

• In a statement urging the churches to take the lead in support of measures required for the success of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration program, the Executive Committee of the Federal Council of Churches has voiced approval of Congressional appropriations of the funds "which would enable the United States to meet its appropriate share of the cost of the program."

The statement further expressed the belief that "our Christian people should be prepared ungrudgingly to limit their demands for food and commodities in order that supplies may be available to meet the acute needs of others."

Contributors

John Halko is a member of the staff of the Department of Cities, American Baptist Home Mission Society.

Benjamin W. Frazier is in the U. S. Office of Education.

Contributions Wanted

• Every reader is a potential contributor of material for this paper.

We need three types of material:

(1) Articles of about 900 words (to fill a page), descriptive of a local program.

(2) Short items; news, plans, publications available.

(3) Illustrations; glossy photos, line drawings, cuts of rural scenes.

Circulars Available

• Quantities of circulars describing TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH are available without charge to any reader. Simply drop us a post card, letting us know how many copies you would like to distribute.